

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-11

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05
H-01 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02
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EB-08 ARA-10 /132 W
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R 291100Z JUN 78
FM USINT BAGHDAD
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6397
INFO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA
AMEMBASSY ALGIERS
AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY DJIBOUTI
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMEMBASSY DOHA
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY DHARTOUM
AMEMBASSY KUWAIT
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY MANAMA
AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY MUSCAT
AMEMBASSY PARIS
/AMEMBASSY RABAT 98
AMEMBASSY TEHRAN
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI
AMEMBASSY TUNIS

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 BAGHDAD 1353

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PEPR, PINT, MASS, IZ
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SUBJ: VISIT OF FRENCH MINISTER OF DEFENSE: TOUR D' HORIZON
WITH SADDAM HUSSEIN

REF BAGHDAD 1329

1. SUMMARY: FRENCH AMBASSADOR MORIZET SAYS THAT VISIT
BY MINDEF BOURGES FOCUSED ON POLITICAL AND NOT

MILITARY SUBJECTS. SADDAM HUSSEIN GAVE EXTENSIVE PRESENTATION OF GOI'S VIEWS ON MAJOR ISSUES, INCLUDING PROBLEMS WITH IRAQI COMMUNISTS, RELATIONS WITH THE USSR, ARMS SUPPLY DIVERSIFICATION, CONCERN OVER STABILITY OF TURKEY AND IRAN, REGIONAL SECURITY PACT, AND EVENTS IN AFRICA. END SUMMARY.

2. AMBASSADOR JACQUES MORIZET, A RESPECTED AND COMPETENT BUT RATHER CLOSE-MOUTHED PROFESSIONAL, SAYS THAT MINDEF BOURGES DID NOT COME TO IRAQ IN HIS NARROW OFFICIAL CAPACITY, BUT RATHER AS A REPLACEMENT FOR PRIME MINISTER BARRE. DOMESTIC PROBLEMS HAD MADE IT CLEAR THAT THE PLANNED BARRE VISIT WOULD HAVE TO BE INDEFINITELY POSTPONED, AND SINCE BOURGES HAS HAD AN INVITATION PENDING FOR ABOUT A YEAR AND IS QUALIFIED BY HIS PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE TO TALK ON A WISE RANGE OF SUBJECTS OF MUTUAL CONCERN, IT WAS DECIDED THAT HE WOULD COME INSTEAD.

3. MORIZET FULLY DISCOUNTED RUMORS RAGING THROUGH BAGHDAD ABOUT FRENCH ARMS SALES, ACCUSING HIS DIPLOMATIC COLLEAGUES OF WILD EXAGGERATION (THE SALE OF THE CENTURY) ABOUT THE NATURE, CONTENT AND PURPOSE OF THE VISIT. HE COMPARED THE FEVER ON THIS SUBJECT TO THE CONSTANT CONCERN OVER THE STATE OF U.S./IRAQI RELATIONS, AND REMINDED ME OF THE GREAT STIR THAT RESULTED WHEN CONFIDENTIAL

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USINT HAPPENED TO BEGIN PAINTING ITS BUILDINGS JUST AS PROBLEMS WITH THE USSR SURFACED A FEW WEEKS AGO. ARMS SALES WERE INDEED DISCUSSED, MOSTLY THE PROBLEMS OF EXISTING(UNSPECIFIED) CONTRACTS, ESPECIALLY IMPLEMENTATION, AND MOSTLY BY MEMBERS OF THE DELEGATION, BUT THE PRINCIPAL PURPOSE AND FOCUS OF THE BOURGES VISIT WERE POLITICAL.

4. THE SESSION WITH SADDAM HUSSEIN, EVIDENTLY LASTING SOME HOURS, WAS THE UNDERSTANDABLE HIGH-POINT OF THE TRIP. ACCORDING TO MORIZET, SADDAM SPOKE OPENLY AND FRANKLY, DID NOT SHY AWAY FROM ANY SUBJECT, AND WAS ARTICULATING IRAQI POLICY RATHER THAN PERSONAL VIEWS. AGAIN ACCORDING TO MORIZET, THE PRINCIPAL POINTS MADE BY SADDAM ARE AS FOLLOWS.

A. IRAQI COMMUNISTS.

THE POSITION OF THE BAATH PARTY AND THE GOI ON THE ROLE OF COMMUNISTS IN IRAQ HAS ALWAYS BEEN CLEAR. EQUALLY CLEAR WAS THE PUNISHMENT FOR THOSE WHO BROKE PUBLICLY-STATED AND WELL-KNOWN RULES. THE DECISION TO EXECUTE THOSE CONVICTED OF COMMUNIST ACTIVITIES IN THE MILITARY WAS THEREFORE NOT INTENDED

AS A MESSAGE TO ANYONE. THE SOVIETS, HOWEVER,
INTERPRETED IT AS SUCH WHEN THE "FIRST BATCH" WAS
EXECUTED AFTER THE INTERVENTION OF THE RUSSIAN
AMBASSADOR, WHO MADE A STRONG DEMARCHE THAT THEY
SHOULD BE SPARED. THE "SECOND BATCH" WAS EXECUTED
AFTER THE SECOND SOVIET DEMARCHE, WHICH WAS REINFORCED
BY INTERVENTIONS FROM THE BULGARIANS, EAST
GERMANS, AND POLES. IN ALL OF THESE CASES, IRAQ
REJECTED AS INTERFERENCE IN ITS INTERNAL AFFAIRS
THE PRESENTATIONS MADE BY OTHER COUNTRIES.
B. RELATIONS WITH THE USSR.

DESPITE THE SHARP DIFFERENCES OVER THE HANDLING OF
DOMESTIC COMMUNISTS AND THE DIVERGENCE OF VIEWS ON
SUCH MATTERS AS THE HORN OF AFRICA, IRAQ WILL CONTINUE
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ITS STRATEGIC RELATIONSHIP WITH THE SOVIETS. AS
IS THE CASE IN RELATIONS WITH ANY COUNTRY, THERE IS
NO NECESSITY FOR AGREEMENT ON ALL MATTERS, PARTICULARLY
THOSE OF SIGNIFICANCE TO EITHER PARTY. IRAQ CONTINUES
TO SEE THAT THE MAJORITY OF ITS CONCERNS ARE BEST MET
THROUGH A CONTINUATION OF CLOSE AND CORDIAL RELATIONS
WITH THE RUSSIANS AND THE BLOC, IRAQ HAS NO INTENTION
WHATEVER OF GIVING UP ANY OF ITS SOVEREIGNTY OR FREEDOM
OF ACTION IN ORDER TO MAINTAIN THE RELATIONSHIP BUT AT
PRESENT DOES NOT BELIEVE THAT THIS IS THE CASSE.
C. ARMS SUPPLY.

IT IS PRECISELY FOR THIS REASON THAT IRQ ALSO INTENDS
TO CONTINUE EFFORTS TO DIVERSIFY THE SOURCES OF
SUPPLY FOR ARMAMENTS. IN THE EYES OF THE GOIN,
THIS POLICY IN NO WAY CONFLICTS WITH THE CONTINUED
STRATEGIC ALLIANCE WITH RUSSIA AND IS MERELY

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INFO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 BAGHDAD 1353

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y T E X T

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A FURTHER REFLECTION OF THE SECOND PILLAR OF BAATH
IDEOLOGY, I.E. INDEPENDENCE. IRAQ REMAINS STRONGLY
OPPOSED TO THE BIPOLARITY GENERATED BY THE TWO
OPPOSING SUPER-POWERS AND WILL CONTINUE TO MAINTAIN
ITS INDEPENDENCE OF BOTH. THE WILLINGNESS OF WESTERN
COUNTRIES, INCLUDING FRANCE, TO PROVIDE IRAQ WITH
MILITARY EQUIPMENT AND TRAINING IS THEREFORE OF
IMPORTANCE TO THE GOI IN CARRYING OUT THIS POLICY.
D. CONCERN OVER STABILITY OF TURKEY AND IRAN.
FROM THE IRAQI POINT OF VIEW, THE TRENDS IN BOTH ITS
NORTHERN NEIGHBORS ARE DISCONCERTING AT THE VERY
LEAST. THE TURKISH GOVERNMENT DISPLAYS AN
INABILITY TO CONTROL THE ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL
PROBLEMS THAT IT FACES, AND THE CURRENT UNREST AND
ARMED CLASHES IN THE REGION OF THE TURKISH-IRAQI
BORDER ARE A SOURCE OF PARTICULAR CONCERN. THE
GOI FEELS IT HAS MADE MAJOR GAINS IN STABILIZING

THE KURDISH SITUATION WITHIN ITS OWN BORDERS AND FEARS THAT THE CLASHES BETWEEN KURDISH FACTIONS IN TURKEY, IN WHICH THE SYRIANS AND THE IRANIANS MAY BE INVOLVED, COULD SPILL OVER. THE SAME GENERAL CONCERNS APPLY TO IRAN, WHERE THE STABILITY OF THE SHAH'S REGIME HAS GENERATED SOME APPREHENSION WITHIN THE GOI, FURTHER HEIGHTENED BY THE COUP IN AFGHANISTAN. WHILE THE IRANIANS HAVE HAD CONSIDERABLE SUCCESS IN HANDLING THEIR OWN KURDS, ANY RESURGENCE OF A STRUGGLE FOR KURDISH AUTONOMY IN TURKEY, WHICH WOULD MOST CERTAINLY INVOLVE COMMUNIST SUPPORT, COULD DRAG IN IRAN AS WELL AS IRAQ. (TURKISH EMBOFF RECENTLY GAVE US SIMILAR ANALYSIS, ADDING THAT IRAQ MIGHT CLOSE ITS SMALL SCALE CLANDESTINE SUPPORT OF SOME TURKISH LEFTIST GROUPS.)

E. REGIONAL SECURITY.

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DESPITE REPORTS IN THE FOREIGN PRESS, IRAQ REMAINS OPPOSED TO REGIONAL PCTS PRINCIPALLY BECAUSE OF THE BELIEF THAT THEY WOULD SERVE AS VEHICLES FOR THE INTERFERENCE OF THE SUPER POWERS. IRAQ DOES BELIEVE THAT THE INDIVIDUAL COUNTRIES OF THE REGION SHOULD BE STRONG AND INDEPENDENT SINCE THIS IS THE BEST MEANS FOR INSURING THE STABILITY OF THE AREA.

F. EVENTS IN AFRICA.

IRAQ HAS SECURED FROM THE CUBANS A SOLID COMMITMENT NOT TO TAKE PART IN ANY MILITARY ACTIVITY DIRECTED AGAINST THE ERITREANS. THE GOI HAS ALSO MADE ITS POSITION ON THIS ISSUE CLEAR TO THE SOVIETS ON NUMEROUS OCCASIONS AND FEELS CONFIDENT THAT THE RUSSIANS WILL ALSO NOT INVOLVE THEMSELVES. AS TO EVENTS IN OTHER PARTS OF AFRICA (ON WHICH SADDAM EVIDENTLY HAD LITTLE INFORMATION OR UNDERSTANDING), IRAQ REMAINED WILLING TO HEAR THE VIEWS OF ALL PARTIES, INCLUDING FRANCE. THE PRINCIPAL GOAL WAS TO INSURE THAT EACH COUNTRY HAD THE OPPORTUNITY TO HANDLE ITS OWN AFFAIRS WITHOUT OUTSIDE INVOLVEMENT AND PROVIDING THAT THE FREE WILL OF THE PEOPLES INVOLVED CAN BE EXPRESSED.

5. COMMENT: WITH THE EXCEPTION OF THE INFORMATION CONCERNING REPRESENTATIONS BY THE RUSSIANS AND OTHERS ON BEHALF OF THE CONDEMNED COMMUNISTS, MUCH OF WHAT SADDAM SAID HAS ALREADY BEEN ASSUMED AND REPORTED FROM BAGHDAD AND ELSEWHERE. NO ONE IS BETTER QUALIFIED, HOWEVER, TO EXPRESS THE BROAD TRENDS IN IRAQI POLICY AND HIS STATEMENTS, THEREFORE, CARRY CONSIDERABLY MORE WEIGHT THAN ARTICLES IN THE LOCAL OR FOREIGN PRESS.

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